



City of Salinas

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March 28, 2000

Honorable John M. Phillips, Presiding Judge
Coordinated Trial Courts, Monterey County
240 Church Street
Salinas, California 93901

SUBJECT: 1999 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report - Efforts to Address
Methamphetamine Use and Distribution in Salinas

Dear Judge Phillips:

The City of Salinas is responding to the findings and recommendations of the Monterey County Grand Jury 1999 Final Report. However, we must first express our appreciation and offer thanks to each participating member of the Civil Grand Jury for giving of their time to assist us in improving our community's quality of life.

The City agrees with the findings outlined in the grand jury report. Monterey County has become the unwitting host to large numbers of individuals involved in the clandestine manufacturing of Methamphetamine. The County's vast rural and generally isolated expanses have attracted large numbers of people to engage in the criminal practice of making Methamphetamine. The Methamphetamine manufacturing cost is negligible compared to the profit returned from its sales. For instance, our Police Department has encountered clandestine manufacturing labs that may only have the capability to produce small quantities of Methamphetamine, but nonetheless have generated sizable profit for the producers.

Methamphetamine production and use has and will continue to be a priority of the Salinas Police Department's (SPD) Narcotic Enforcement Unit. The six-person Narcotic Enforcement Unit investigates substance abuse, illicit sales and illegal manufacture of drugs, including Methamphetamine. The City agrees that the prevalence of Methamphetamine-related criminal activities places the population-at-large at increased risk of such crimes as burglary, robbery, and assault. Furthermore, we agree that continued usage of Methamphetamine results in psychological dependence and strong physical addiction. Tolerance does develop with continued usage, which requires the user to spend more money to buy more Methamphetamine to achieve the desired results. This need for additional spending does increase the risk of property related crimes such as thefts and burglary. Additionally, addicted users become easily agitated and are prone to committing acts of violence, such as assaults.

I am happy to report that the SPD currently enjoys a positive relationship with the Sheriff's Narcotic Unit and information regarding Methamphetamine, as well as many other drugs, is openly shared. Additionally, while I can't comment on what seizures are, or are not, contemplated by allied Law Enforcement within Monterey County, I can say that the SPD actively investigates all asset seizure possibilities. However, any possible asset seizure requires consideration of the following: ownership of property, liens against property, and cost of clean up. In some instances those considerations may preclude an active seizure.

In addition to the findings, the City is providing a response to the recommendations outlined by the Civil Grand Jury. The responses follow the recommendations made by the Civil Grand Jury:

Recommendation #1

Law Enforcement agencies approach the Methamphetamine problem as a distinct entity not related to other drug enforcement activities.

Response #1

While the City acknowledges the problems associated with the manufacture, sale and use of Methamphetamine in our community, the recommendation by the Civil Grand Jury to have Law Enforcement agencies approach the Methamphetamine problem as a distinct entity not related to other drug enforcement activities is not feasible. SPD along with the Monterey County Sheriffs Department staff, are the only two full-time narcotic enforcement units within the county. There are currently several multi-agency narcotic task forces in existence within Monterey County that are supervised by the Sheriff's Department. In a perfect world this would have great merit - However, community priorities and the allocation of limited resources prevent us from addressing Methamphetamine as an isolated community problem.

Recommendation #2

Law Enforcement agencies be required to submit information concerning all arrests relating to Methamphetamine to the press in the form of press releases rather than simply indicating such incidents in the daily activities log.

Response #2

While the intent of this recommendation is understood, the wording "required" could have negative fallout to the intent. Often times law enforcement utilizes recently arrested individuals to further narcotic related investigations. The ability to continue in that manner may be jeopardized if law enforcement is mandated to report the details of all arrests relating to Methamphetamine. Our practice is to treat the police report consistent with the California Public Records Act and only exempt information as expressly allowed under the Act. An example of when such information may be kept confidential is when a police arrest is part of an ongoing criminal investigation and one of the arrestee's is an informant.

Recommendation #3

Law enforcement agencies develop a coordinated communications plan so that Methamphetamine information can be effectively shared by all agencies.

Response to #3

The SPD, along with the Monterey County Sheriffs Department staff, are the only two full-time narcotic enforcement units within the county. There are several multi-agency narcotic task forces in existence within Monterey County that are supervised by the Sheriff's Department.

We currently enjoy a very positive relationship with the Sheriff's Narcotic Unit and information regarding Methamphetamine, as well as many other drugs, is openly shared between these work forces. The City will work to strengthen this relationship with the County as well as other municipalities in Monterey County.

Recommendation #4

The Monterey County Board of Supervisors (BOS) seek the means for funding special Methamphetamine-abatement personnel and programs.

Response to #4

The Salinas City Council does not have direct input into the allocation of resources at the County level.

Recommendation #5

The BOS seek the means of funding environmental clean up of legally seized, Methamphetamine-related properties, and execute the re-sale of such properties as a means of funding increased anti-Methamphetamine activities.

Response to #5

The Salinas City Council does not have direct input into the allocation of resources at the County level.

Recommendation #6

The BOS and City Councils provide funding for the purchase of a Methamphetamine-trained canine.

Response to #6

Having a dedicated "drug" dog could provide a benefit to addressing the Methamphetamine issue in the County. However, we do not believe the dog should be limited to only one drug. The City currently has a good working relationship with the Monterey County Probation Department. The Probation Department has a dog trained specifically for drug related activities. This resource is shared with Salinas as well as other jurisdictions.

Recommendation #7

The BOS and City Councils provide funding for the training and placement of more Methamphetamine-qualified deputies in the field.

Response to #7

The City deploys its resources based on community priorities and need. The current Police Department's organizational structure has been developed to provide the most efficient and effective services to our residents. We do not believe that this recommendation would provide our residents with the added benefits as proposed by there commendation.

Finally, I once again thank you for encouraging our review of the Methamphetamine issue in Salinas. If you need clarification or desire additional information on the City's responses, please contact Lt. Steve Perryman of the Salinas Police Department at 758-7350.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anna M. Caballero", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

ANNA M. CABALLERO
Mayor

ADS/WG